

That voice, that cold, cold tongue cried out "Eurydice!"
Cried "Poor Eurydice!" as the soul of the singer fled,
And the banks of the river echoed, echoed "Eurydice!"

Thus Proteus spake, and dived into the sea's depths,
And where he dived the water, foaming, spun in a funnel.

Cyrene waited and spoke a word to her frightened son:
'You may cast your cares away,'

She said, 'for here is the whole truth of your bees' sickness
And the death they were dealt by the nymphs with whom Eurydice
Danced in the deep woods. So offer them gifts and make your
Peace with them, and pray to the Gracious Ones of the grove.
They will answer your prayers with forgiveness, they will forget their anger.
But first let me tell you the form your orisons must take.
Choose four bulls of excellent body that now on the heights of
Green Lycaeus are grazing,

And as many heifers whose necks have never felt the yoke.
Build for these four altars beside the lofty shrines
Of the goddesses, and let the sacred blood from their throats,
Then leave the oxen's bodies alone in a leafy thicket.
When the ninth day has dawned
You shall send oblivion's poppies as a funeral gift to Orpheus,
Slay a calf in honour of Eurydice placated,
Slaughter a black ewe and go to the thicket again.'

Without delay he acts at once on his mother's advice:
He comes to the shrine, erects — as she told him — altars, and brings
Four bulls of excellent body
With as many heifers whose necks have never felt the yoke:
When the ninth day has dawned,
Sends funeral gifts to Orpheus and goes to the thicket again.
Here, to be sure, a miracle sudden and strange to tell of
They behold: from the oxen's bellies all over their rotting flesh

[Lines 524-554]

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Creatures are humming, swarming through the wreckage of their ribs —
Huge and trailing clouds of bees, that now in the treetops
Unite and hang like a bunch of grapes from the pliant branches.

Thus of agriculture and the care of flocks I sang
And forestry, while great Caesar fired his lightnings and conquered
By deep Euphrates, and gave justice to docile peoples,
Winning his way to the Immortals.
This was the time when I, Virgil, nurtured in sweetest
Parthenope, did follow unknown to fame the pursuits
Of peace, who dallied with pastoral verse, and by youth emboldened,
Tityrus, sang of you in the shade of a spreading beech.

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[Lines 555-565]